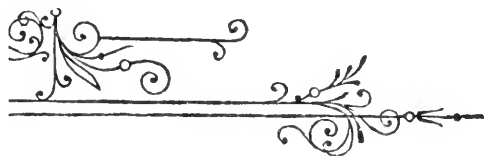


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A Character Sketch.

ISAAC CROOK, D. D., LL. D.







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BY

ISAAC CROOK, D. D., LL. D.



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HON. C. C. WHITE.

ONE needs the skill of a Leigh Richmond to describe the nature of such a man as Charles Clark White. Biography of the world's few conspicuous men is less difficult, but they belong to the smaller class and come not into such close touch with the lives of the many. Charles Clark White filled his place with singular completeness.

His personal presence was very pleasing, and expressed the real man. Not far from six feet in height, his erect, well-proportioned form had an air of dignity and ease suggestive of military training, without its constraint. His head was shapely and well poised, sprinkled a little prematurely with gray hairs. The nose was slightly aquiline, the mouth well curved, the chin firm, and the eye dark blue. Over this face swept expressions of seriousness, dropping into sadness at times, but more often into cheerfulness, which, specially among friends and at home, broke out into smiles. He had much power to conciliate men,

due largely to the manner in which his sterling worth expressed itself in a way so frank, cheerful, and polite as to mark him for a true gentleman and one to be trusted. This manner was so genial as to have led his comrades and associates, with no hint of disrespect, to call him "Charlie."

The outward story of his life need not be long—true with us all. He was born in Sylvania, near Toledo, Ohio, February 24, 1843, and attended the common schools, also a local academy, till eighteen years of age. He intended to become a teacher, but instead enlisted in the 9th Illinois Cavalry, and for three years had the stern schooling of war—in camp-life and battle, and for seven months in prison at Libby and Belle Isle. Exchanged, he returned to his regiment and served out the term of his enlistment. In 1864 he settled near Raymond, Nebraska, and engaged in farming, to support his widowed mother and sisters. January 19, 1868, he married a teacher, Miss Olive A. Johnson, of Valparaiso. In this marriage he found a helper in every excellence and a large part of his life success.

He was elected treasurer of Lancaster County, Nebraska, in 1873, and a second time at the end of the first term. During this time

his home was in Lincoln. In 1878 he again moved to Valparaiso, where he continued to live for ten years.

He was elected senator for Saunders County in 1880. During the same year he was honored as delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held at Cincinnati. He moved to Crete, Nebraska, in 1888, where, as an enterprising leader in the milling business, he prospered and became a blessing to the city and State. After a brief illness, he died September 20, 1895, just as he had come to the riper years of full maturity.

His funeral took place from St. Paul's Church, Lincoln, where the Nebraska Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was in session, both lay and clerical, to the former of which he was to have come as a delegate. After impressive services, participated in by Conference, Masons, Woodmen, trustees, professors, and students of the Nebraska Wesleyan University, and a crowd of citizens, he was borne to Wyuka Cemetery, where, amid a great throng, and after hundreds of students had passed by, paying a loving floral tribute to his memory, he was laid to rest.

This were a barren story, but for the life

it covered and him who lived it. His intimate friends, such as saw most of his real life, are his greatest admirers. Incidental glimpses, when he could not be on guard, showed him at his best. The real man grows on one by careful observation. It may indicate how deeply and widely rooted was his life, when we recall but his official relations. At home he was class-leader, president of the Church Board of Trustees, leader of the choir, Sunday-school superintendent, president of the Young Men's Christian Association, president of the Board of Education; and he attended to all of them. He had been president of the State Millers' Association; was, at his death, president of the Veterans of the 9th Illinois Cavalry, member of the Board of the Central State Sunday-school Convention, president of the Crete Chautauqua Assembly, and president of the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska Wesleyan University. He attended to these several duties cheerfully and systematically, without hurtful neglect of private business or domestic life. Surely he must have been highly endowed with executive ability and inspired with great philanthropy.

But this officialism was not based on personal ambition. He was not an office-seeker,

nor did he retreat from the confidence implied in a proffered trust. One who knew him intimately, in a business acquaintance of twenty years, says: "The personal pronoun 'I' was conspicuous in his case *by its absence*." His modest readiness to serve was based on a feeling of comprehensive brotherhood. He was a Woodman, a Mason, an Oddfellow, a Union soldier, generous to Confederates; a party man appreciating the best in the opposition, and open-minded to new and better views. He was a Methodist theoretically and practically; but many of his sweetest, most sacred fellowships were in the Churches differing from his own most radically. His love was too large for denominational fences. His correspondence and the letters of sympathy written after his death, reveal a widespread feeling of esteem, amounting, as one says, "to a sentiment akin to reverence." These tribute-bearing letters are from clergymen, educators, lawyers, physicians, merchants, millers, grain-dealers, pastors of congregations, in and out of his State, from East and West, North and South. But the most significant of all come from the unfortunate. Little wonder, when we remember that he once said to his wife: "How can I sleep when, there is under our roof a broken

heart!" It was the heart-break of a hired girl. Or he would say: "I must at least go and shake hands with the people in that prairie schooner and speak an encouraging word." Or when a transient hired man would be overcome with drink, he would try the man again, saying: "Were I in his place I might have done no better." One such man was under his care when he died; and a poor Bohemian woman, on hearing of his death, sat down in the street crying, as she said, "I've lost the best friend I had in the world." One closest to him in his office says, "There was scarcely a day without his giving relief privately;" nor was he harsh in the manner of doing it. Another of his greatest admirers, a business partner, confesses to being often tried by the belief "Mr. White was imposed upon by charity-seekers."

But whence came this spirit? And who said: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me?" A clue to his business honor and kindness, which won for him the name "Miller Philanthropist," may be seen in the fact that there was found written as a motto on his desk when county treasurer, and also in his books when miller, "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues

without right." Many a man had escaped dishonor for himself and family by placing this old-fashioned motto in sight and obeying it. "A tree is known by its fruits;" and those of Bible righteousness are good when they control the ledger and the life. Take one instance of his honesty: A man sent one penny too much for taxes, and White returned the money in a one-cent stamp. "Faithful in little, faithful in much."

His generosity was both natural and acquired. His religion and benevolence came easier than with some men. There are those who pass through a death to reach either, and develop poorly. White began early and developed grandly. It was a saying with him: "Life is not worth living but to do good." On his birthday anniversary, which occurred on a Sabbath, the writer said to him, "Your business prospects are good; you could easily acquire great wealth by devoting yourself entirely to business." He fairly interrupted the remark, saying, "It would not be worth the attainment." He then outlined his purpose to devote steadily each year from his resources to the cause of education, and summed up all in declaring his purpose to make money to take care of his family, his credit, and help the

cause of God. A characteristic illustration may be given of this care for others when he was a prisoner at Belle Isle. He was selected as a clerk for the distribution of rations, and as such was favored with a double portion for himself. In spite of scarcity and hunger he shared with those not so fortunate. In this he was detected and the extra ration was taken from him. At Chicago during the Columbian Exposition he took his family to see "Old Libby" there on exhibition, and pointed out the spot where he lay while prisoner. There he had shared his narrow blanket with two others. Little wonder that the boys in ragged blue called him "Charlie," and do so still, as their hair turns white and their ranks grow thin!

The educational turn of his generosity is remarkable. His own schooling was checked, as was that of so many others, by the war. But he was a good miscellaneous reader and kept in touch with most of the better class of magazines, and sometimes read a choice book. In this his wisdom was like that of some other busy men whom the writer recalls—one a railroad man, whose early education was meager, but to whose family reading-room it is a pleasure for the scholar to resort. Another, a con-

gressman, around whom unusual storms have swept for years at Washington, has quietly recited to a teacher in French, in Spanish, and in Italian. Thus he stood the storms all the better. Members of the British Parliament are wonderful students and scholars outside of politics. From a similar spirit sprang Mr. White's ambition to keep enlarging his own mental horizon, and to push forward the educational interests of which he said, "*This must be God's work if he has any in this world.*"

Would that some of the men and women he has helped to an education could pay their tribute to his memory! One of them, modestly and in simple, graphic style, melted all hearts on the day of burial, as he spoke of the homeless boy and of the kindness that sheltered, encouraged and started him on his way to hope, self-respect, development, and to the ministry. Many others could reveal what must await the time when the question is raised, "When saw we thee sick, and ministered unto thee?"

To many personally, and to the priceless work of the university, that funeral-day was one of the saddest of life. As to the Austrians at Austerlitz, the going down of the sun ended

so much of hope after such hard fighting . . . our ally was gone!

He was a pioneer in Nebraska. This meant hardships and self-sacrifice. After his marriage he lived with his bride in a home which he had builded with great labor; there were several neighbors with families, but no school or public funds. He secured a few slabs from a portable sawmill, cut holes in them, and drove in pegs for legs. These rough benches were put in one of the rooms of his simple home. There he collected his neighbors' children, and his wife taught them. The labor and privation of such benevolent work can be appreciated by those who have been pioneers, and by such as at that time received a start in education, among them the Worley brothers, one now a useful educator in Kansas, the other a self-sacrificing missionary in China. The father of these boys brought them eight miles each Monday morning; Mrs. White kept and taught them until Friday evening. Such was Mr. White's enthusiasm in the service of education, and ever after he was on educational boards from "district school" to the university.

When he returned from the war he bought a team and worked his mother's homestead,

thus supporting his mother and sisters. He rose early to travel miles to market, often eating his lunch, already frozen, and one time losing his entire load of salt in the stream. But his courage did not dissolve with the salt. Once a prairie fire leaped the stream and swept away his house and thousands of dollars' worth of machinery and tools for farming, he and his family only escaping. Yet under all these adversities he maintained his integrity and became a wealthy man.

There is something still deeper than these things, *his purity of mind*. This was seen in his speech. It is said that an officer was about to tell a story in General Grant's presence, but looking around inquired, "Are there any ladies present?" Grant said, "No, but there are *gentlemen*." The spirit of that reply was the mental habit with White. A business partner of long intimacy testifies that he never heard from him a word unfit to be spoken in the presence of his wife and daughters. He did not speak evil of his neighbors. He said to his pastor, "I can not bear to hear ill of any one." To another, when discussing political intrigue and place-seeking, "I can not believe men are so bad; if they are, I do not want to know it."

His gentleness did not mean weakness. His was not the pliability of the willow, but of the palm, which bends to the zephyr, yet withstands the simoon. Men who undertook to dislodge him from a right position by bribes or threats, found cause for humiliation and shame. That mild blue eye could flash fire, and that kind face be as set as a helmet of steel. Though generous in his interpretation of men's motives, he read character accurately. Like the Master, he condemned and forgave the sins of weakness for which men were sorry, but his wrath was unsparing towards hypocrisy.

Nor was he always a placid soul. His mind often swept out into the awful mysteries of law and Providence; of evil and destiny. Amid the strain of responsibility caused by drought and disaster, he was seen under the juniper-tree more than once. Souls as strong as his grow by suffering. Much of his ability to carry the sorrows of others came of this.

Who shall lift the veil of the life at home? His home-coming, how it was greeted, and how gladsome, with story and song, as his clear voice blended with those of his daughters at the piano, or led at the altar of prayer! What home had so many and so welcome guests?

Would there were more such in the world! None can be so happy which does not increase its own brightness by hospitality. The atmosphere about this one, so filled with politeness and kindness, spoke more than words. It must have been such which attracted so often the Man of Galilee to the home at Bethany. Yet even with Mr. White such a home and such a charming hospitality would have been impossible but for the model home-keeper. Though the circle is now broken and the place changed, the atmosphere of "Home, sweet home," remains to those he left.

His letters to his young daughters contain choice sentiments. In one he laments with them over the death of "Don Pedro," the dog, saying: "I too am very sorry and much distressed over the death of Don Pedro. . . . Kiss Grace and Carol for me, and tell them that papa feels like crying with them." In another, he thanks the child for her kind wishes, and says, "The Lord does not always reward us with what we call prosperity." Again, "Nothing takes the place of goodness, and nothing is so beautiful." In a letter from the South: "This is the time of year when the 'colored man and brother' is 'yanking' his one mule around by a rope-line and scratch-

ing up the ground a little, pretending to plow. We would call it poor plowing, but it suits them. They raise cotton mainly, but some of them raise 'Cain.' " To his wife, from Toledo, O., near life's close: "I want to know whether you approve my going to Europe if I can not leave New York before July 31st, which would mean that I could not return before the first week in September. I hardly know how to be away from you and the girls so long. I find myself so homesick to see you." "Now, darling wifie, you must take such measures, regardless of expense, as will secure you comfort and rest." "Our drought is yet unbroken. A general feeling of discouragement exists, and old settlers say the coming winter will be the hardest one ever seen in Nebraska. But you will say I am croaking."

To Lillian: "I hope you will always make it a point to do well whatever you undertake to do. I am quite well, but homesick to see my family—mother and daughters. I am standing it first-rate because I know it is so much better that your mother should be there than here."

In nothing does a man's quality show so

well as in home discipline. His law was love, but love with *authority*. Persistent in bringing each child to obey the right, it was so gently done as to weaken nothing in the child's nature but evil. He played on conscience, directed the will, and led through the judgment and affections. On one occasion the little three years old had ruthlessly used the scissors on a good table-cover. When papa returned, one said, "Carol has done a naughty thing." Mr. White smilingly said, "Will my little daughter tell papa what she has done?" For fully twenty minutes he pleasantly, yet persistently, asked the child the same question until, penitent, she took his hand and led him to the table. He took her in his arms, saying, "Papa is so sorry." So seldom did he use physical discipline, that on one rare occasion the slightest touch brought from the astonished child the remonstrance, "Punishment belongs to mamma!" Glancing into the sacred precincts of the last will and testament we find him saying, "My beloved wife, to whom I owe my prosperity, and whom I regard as my equal partner . . ." But we must withdraw from that sacred place, knowing enough to be sure it is holy.

Love is the "greatest," for it is both gentlest and firmest. It is the source of all spiritual sunshine in heart and home, in life and learning. Well might George Romanes quote as he returns from the darkness of agnostic wanderings toward the Light of the World:

"The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the whole world dies
With the setting sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of the whole life dies
When *love* is done."

Without this, such a man as White can not be explained.

Will any stop here without going to the yet deeper source of this character? He would protest that only his goodness has been dwelt upon, and that he too was but a sinful, blundering man. This is true, yet he found the remedy for sin. He had, like many a soldier, deferred his enlistment in divine service till after the close of the war, and until after marriage came. Though impelled by reason and conscience, and urged by duty as head of a family, and led by an affectionate wife, the step

so honestly and resolutely taken required a higher type of courage than a cavalry charge upon a battery of cannon, as many a veteran can testify. How sad to see the honored hero of many a battle-field, who never faltered before shot and steel, quail before his duty here, though surrounded by home friends, and impelled by eternal and divine motives! The great honor of being the spiritual guide of Mr. White and his wife, at this critical time, fell to Rev. H. T. Davis, D. D. First, he was their guest at Raymond, and, like sensible people, they talked frankly on religion. In a year Davis returned as presiding elder. Before he came Mr. White said, "Wife, I fear I can't hold out much longer against Elder Davis's preaching." "I also feel that way," she said. After the sermon, on the following Sabbath night, invitation was given for inquirers to go forward for prayer. His wife said, "Let us go." He replied, "Do you wish to?" "Yes." "All right." And to that humble school-house altar they went, and again were united in a holier bond than ever. Here, as often, the wife was the leader, while he was a willing follower and *companion*. She soon found peace that floweth as a river. He held

resolutely on, going three nights in succession, when he too entered into peace, and said, "Glory, glory, hallelujah!" Now, after twenty-three years of service, he is with the innumerable company whose hallelujahs never end.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THE following words, substantially as they were spoken by Rev. James Mailley at the funeral, are so characteristic that they, with a few quotations from letters, form a suitable appendix:

“I have lost my friend. Many tongues, I know, will frame these words, when it is learned that C. C. White has passed away. But to me it means very much. Many of you, especially of the members of the Nebraska Conference, know what were the relations that existed between us; some of you know what he was to me, what was the influence of his life upon mine. It is of this that I would speak.

“You will hear much of him as a public benefactor; and there is much to tell, more than will ever be told. I may be pardoned for dwelling for the short time allotted me, upon what this prince of Methodism was to me.

“Fifteen years have gone since I first met Brother White. He then lived in Valparaiso. His home was the large frame house on the hill overlooking the village; my home was nowhere in all the wide world. He took me to his home in

the dusk of one Saturday evening. I had never before been the guest of such a home, and to my uncultured eyes it was a veritable wonderland of plenty and comfort. Rough and uncouth, I gazed about me—at the carpet on the floor, at the pictures on the walls, at the books in the book-case—and was charmed. But the greatest charm of all I found in the people who called this place ‘home.’ I thought how small a price would be the whole world to pay for the love and friendship of such people as these; but as I compared myself with them, it seemed impossible that they should care for such a one as I. I remember wishing they *would* like me, and wishing that such a home as that could be mine.

“As the dusk fell deeper on the world, I sat by the east window and longed for some sign from some member of that family telling me that I was a *little* more to them than a stranger stopping for a night. The sign came; it came from the baby, from Baby Lillian. She was ill and fretful and wakeful. I took her to me; she settled down in my arms, nestled her little head against my rough bosom, and—fell asleep. Friends, from that hour through all these fifteen years, that home has been my home; and from the kingly soul whom God has taken to himself, and from the other members of this family circle, there have come to me many—O so many!—proofs of an affection of which I have been all unworthy. Many times during these years I

must have sorely tried his patience, but I have never turned to him in vain. Some of you know that it was he who first took me by the hand and led me out of that dark labyrinth of discouragement and ignorance in which years of homeless wandering and neglect had left me ; who first put into my hands the money that made it possible for me to see and catch something of the spirit of that center of the cultured Methodism of the West, Evanston.

"I am in the ministry to-day, and in the Methodist ministry, because, at the critical period of my life, I met C. C. White. Years ago I used to look at him and ask God to make me as noble and as good a man as he was. Last Friday afternoon I stood beside his bier, and, looking into his dear, dead face, I breathed again that old prayer, and dedicated myself anew to the work for which he had given his best thought—the spread of Christ's kingdom in the world.

"He was a father to me. In spite of natural weakness ; in spite of the follies growing out of the soil of an untrained boyhood ; in spite of eccentricities that must have jarred roughly upon a man of such fine sensibility, of such unswerving moral integrity, of such exalted spiritual ideals,—in spite of all this, and much more, C. C. White has been to me more than a friend : he has been a father ; and as such I shall revere his name and memory so long as my life shall last. And we shall meet again,—O, we shall meet again!"

FROM LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE.

"Surely he was a prince in Israel, and I am sure that the memory of his noble life will lead very many to higher ideals and better living. I know I owe more to you and to him than to all the rest of the world." M. S., Nebraska.

"What a friend in a thousand! We have never found his equal anywhere we have been. He was a prince among men."

H. McR. H., Washington, D. C.

"We have known him so long and so well; such a noble and generous man!"

M. J. M., Nebraska.

"In the death of Mr. White we feel that we have lost a friend, as we considered him one of the best among the comrades. We very much enjoyed his talks at our last reunion at Cambridge."

J. A. T. AND FAMILY, Illinois.

"He was *an ideal man*; a friend to all. His kind face was an inspiration to all. But he was more and did more than most of men. He lived out his number of days quickly, doing good, making himself useful." MRS. VAN DOOZER.

“Why should God take one so noble, and one who did so much good in this world for God and humanity?”
MRS. GUILD.

“Few are the men so universally *loved*, as well as respected; and rare are those of whom it can be truthfully said, ‘Servant of God, well done.’”
R. H., Nebraska.

“I have never known his name coupled with aught but goodness.”
A. A. A., Nebraska.

“It is comfort to you that your husband was so beloved by all who knew him, not only for his gentlemanly and Christian conduct, but also for the kind, generous deeds his great heart was ever prompting him to do. But the greater comfort is that he so lived that when his last summons came he was ready to hear the glad welcome, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.’”
MRS. L. L. A., Nebraska.

“Mr. Ellenwood said, when he came home from the funeral he felt so lonely; he had always felt free to talk with Mr. White about everything as he could with no one else. The people of University Place feel that they have lost their best friend. We do all appreciate what he did for the university, and it was so courageous for him to take every little affair of the university so to his heart with all his other cares. It gave us more courage.”
C. E.

"Dear Brother White! How often I had held him up to my friends as the model president of a Board of Trustees, and as a worthy example of a well-rounded gentleman! Thus I have spoken to friends both in and out of the State, and thus will he evermore live in my memory." T. A. A.

"Dear Mrs. White,—Save one who is like him, I loved your husband better than any man on earth, more indeed than I realized until now he is gone. It was not for his Christianity, nor entirely for his generous deeds. . . . It was for his character and true manhood. I knew him better than he thought, and loved him because he was what I would like my boys to be. While men talked yesterday morning of many virtues which during his life were apparent to all, the virtue to me the best of all, the one whose possession can be only absolutely known by closest friends, the rarest virtue in a man, was a clear name and pure heart. I thought of a promise which is neither promiscuous nor qualified, 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' etc." I. H. H.

"I loved him as an ideally perfect man."

S. E. HERMANCÉ.

"It was a pleasure to have done some business with him. His frank, open, manly way of putting every proposition won our esteem and confidence at once. Upon entering our office the second time, I so well remember his salutation,

‘Well, boys, I was up in Atlanta, so near that I could not pass you without calling, although I expect no business.’ ”

W. G. SOLOMAN & MCRAE, Macon, Ga.

“Of my old comrade in prison pens from Atlanta, Ga., to Libby and Belle Isle, well acquainted with his sterling integrity.”

C. M. WITHSTRUK, Nebraska.

“Acquaintance for ten years; for his unfeigned piety, his inflexible fidelity, and his noble instincts of justice, my love amounts to almost veneration.”

J. J. W.

“I think it is given to few persons to be such a benediction to their fellow-men and such a help to their race as was he. . . . Few men would be so greatly missed and so generally mourned in this part of Nebraska. . . . His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world, ‘This was a *man*.’ ”

J. M. B.

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